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Review: Tabs3 v. Timeslips for Time-Billing

By Jason E. Havens

TechnoLawyer member Edward asks:
"We are a small firm with five lawyers which has been experiencing a continuing problem with the operation of Timeslips 2004 ... our IT consultants have not been able to get the program to work at anything reasonably approaching acceptable speed...."

"Before I take the entire system and consign it to the dust heap of history I'd like to find out if anyone else had a similar problem (and even more desirable) was able to come up with a solution?"

TechnoLawyer member Charles responded:
"I've used Timeslips for ten years, through all of its dysfunctional upgrades (including infamous v. 10.5). Being solo, I've become an expert by necessity. Timeslips is powerful and flexible, and cheaper than the competition. BUT it is not easy to work with ..."

Edward and Charles:

I respectfully disagree, Charles, although I will freely admit that you are a far more experienced Timeslips user. These issues have been discussed at length on this discussion list (TechnoLawyer) and others of which I am a member. It seems that Timeslips has improved to some degree in recent years, but due to my extremely negative experiences several years ago, I would NEVER try Timeslips again!

As many already know, my search for a truly user-friendly billing system has taken me from Amicus Attorney with Timeslips to PCLaw to AbacusLaw and finally to Tabs3/PracticeMaster. Each of these systems offered advantages and disadvantages, as with any system. However, in terms of a functional, intuitive,

user-friendly system that actually produces bills easily and in a timely fashion, there is no better system than Tabs3 in my view.

Tabs3 has "led the pack" in many of the awards (TechnoLawyer and elsewhere), and rightfully so. The icons are simple and intuitive. Pre-billing and billing are easy for your staff – and even for you! Advanced features include integration with a personal data assistant (PDA) and/or smartphone and also with QuickBooks, although I do not use these features as frequently as others.

The "front-end" part of the system, PracticeMaster, is also worth exploring. I use it in conjunction with Outlook and other applications – the only practice/case management system that I have used that works seamlessly with Outlook. However, for a busy law firm, the key part of any of these systems is the "back-end," that is, time/billing. For that part, my vote is decidedly for Tabs3.

I have posted and even written a TechnoFeature on this subject, so please view those for my additional thoughts. I hope that these thoughts help you and others.

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